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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 HARARE 003680

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/S - ARLENE RENDER AND TODD FAULK

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2001

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SUBJECT: SUSPECTED CIO MOLE RENDERS ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF
TRADE UNIONS INEFFECTIVE

CLASSIFIED BY LABOFF SHAWN THORNE FOR REASONS 1.5 (B)
AND (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: ISADORE ZINDOGA, WHO WAS
ADMINISTRATIVELY PROMOTED TO SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ZIMBABWE CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS (ZCTU) IN APRIL AFTER
MORGAN TSVANGIRAI TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE
POSITION TO LEAD THE MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE
(MDC), IS WIDELY ACCUSED BY MANY UNIONISTS OF PURPOSELY
FAILING TO LEAD THE ZCTU AND RENDERING THE ORGANIZATION
INEFFECTIVE. ZINDOGA'S LOYALTY TO THE RULING PARTY,
ZANU-PF, IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE, AND HE IS RUMORED TO BE A
FORMER (SOME SAY CURRENT) AGENT OF THE CENTRAL
INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION (CIO). WHETHER OR NOT ZINDOGA
IS GUILTY OF SUBVERSION, THE FACT IS THAT THE ZCTU HAS
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FALLEN DEAFLY SILENT UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP. REGULAR ZCTU
ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING LABOR WORKSHOPS AND TRADITIONAL
RECRUITING ACTIVITIES, ARE AT A STANDSTILL. IN THE RUN-
UP TO THE JUNE 24-25 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS, THE ZCTU
FAILED TO JOIN CIVIL SOCIETY IN CONDEMNING PRE-ELECTION
VIOLENCE AND ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO VOTE. ISAAC MATONGO,
PRESIDENT OF THE ZCTU AND CHAIRMAN OF THE MDC, IS
CONFIDENT THAT UNIONISTS WILL VOTE ZINDOGA OUT OF OFFICE
AT THE NEXT ANNUAL CONGRESS, WHICH MATONGO HOPES WILL
TAKE PLACE IN SEPTEMBER 2000. UNTIL THAT HAPPENS, WE DO
NOT EXPECT THE ZCTU TO RE-EMERGE AS A CHAMPION OF
WORKERS' RIGHTS AND A VOCAL STAKEHOLDER IN DISCUSSIONS
WITH BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT ON ECONOMIC REFORM. END
SUMMARY.

GOZ PLANTS A MOLE

2. (C) ISADORE ZINDOGA, WHO WORKED FOR AND MANAGED
SEVERAL LEATHER PROCESSING COMPANIES IN ZIMBABWE IN HIS
CAREER, JOINED THE LEATHER WORKERS' UNION (ONE OF THE

ZCTU'S 35 MEMBER UNIONS) IN 1995. HE QUICKLY MOVED UP THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE ZCTU, AND IN SEPTEMBER 1998 WAS ELECTED TO THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ("THE EXECUTIVE") AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL. (MORGAN TSVANGIRAI WAS THE ZCTU'S SECRETARY GENERAL, AND GIBSON

SIPDIS
SIBANDA ITS PRESIDENT.) IN APRIL (SEVEN MONTHS AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE MDC IN SEPTEMBER 1999), TSVANGIRAI AND SIBANDA OFFICIALLY TOOK PAID LEAVES OF ABSENCE TO FOCUS FULL-TIME ON THE NEW PARTY. THE ZCTU USED ADMINISTRATIVE
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PROMOTIONS TO FILL THE LEADERSHIP VOID. ZINDOGA, AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, TOOK TSVANGIRAI'S JOB; AND ISAAC MATONGO, WHO HAD BEEN FIRST VICE PRESIDENT, TOOK SIBANDA'S JOB AS PRESIDENT.

13. (C) AS SECRETARY GENERAL, ZINDOGA HOLDS THE MOST POWERFUL POSITION IN THE ZCTU. HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THE ORGANIZATION'S DAILY OPERATIONS, AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND GENERAL COUNCIL (WHO REPRESENT THE 35 MEMBER UNIONS AND THE ZCTU'S SIX DEPARTMENTS) RECEIVE THEIR INSTRUCTIONS DIRECTLY FROM HIM. ZINDOGA'S LOYALTY TO THE RULING ZANU-PF PARTY IS WIDELY RECOGNIZED WITHIN THE ZCTU, AS IS THAT OF ZINDOGA'S "RIGHT HAND MAN," SHANGWA CHIFAMBA, WHO IS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE COMMERCIAL WORKERS' UNION AND

SIPDIS
HAS BEEN THE ZCTU'S FIRST VICE PRESIDENT SINCE NOVEMBER 1999. ZINDOGA AND CHIFAMBA, ALONG WITH A FEW OTHER GENERAL COUNCIL MEMBERS, ARE CONSIDERED TO BE THE SMALL ZANU-PF "CAMP" WITHIN THE ZCTU, WHILE THE VAST MAJORITY OF UNION MEMBERS SUPPORT THE MDC. ZINDOGA'S CHIEF RIVAL IS ZCTU PRESIDENT AND MDC CHAIRMAN ISAAC MATONGO. ALTHOUGH THE ZCTU PRESIDENCY IS NOT A FULL-TIME POSITION AND NORMALLY IS CONSIDERED MORE CEREMONIAL THAN SUBSTANTIVE, MATONGO COMMANDS SIGNIFICANT RESPECT AND LOYALTY FROM ZCTU OFFICIALS -- LARGELY BECAUSE OF HIS

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MANY YEARS IN THE ORGANIZATION, HIS LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE MDC, AND HIS CLOSE PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH TSVANGIRAI.

SIPDIS

14. (C) BEYOND HIS OPEN SUPPORT FOR THE RULING PARTY, RUMORS ABOUT THAT ZINDOGA PREVIOUSLY WAS AN AGENT FOR THE CIO. SOME UNION CONTACTS ASSERT THAT ZINDOGA STILL IS IN THE CIO'S EMPLOY AS AN UNDERCOVER AGENT TASKED WITH WREAKING HAVOC IN THE ZCTU. (ZINDOGA'S WIFE IS A ZIMBABWE REPUBLIC POLICE OFFICER AND REPORTEDLY A STRONG ZANU-PF SUPPORTER.) ZINDOGA AND HIS ZANU-PF CAMP DID NOT SUPPORT THE ZCTU'S NATIONWIDE "STAYAWAYS" (WORK STOPPAGES) IN LATE 1998 TO DEMAND SALARY INCREASES, NOR DID THEY SUPPORT THE FORMATION OF THE MDC. ALTHOUGH HE WAS LARGELY NONCOMMITTAL IN HIS BRIEF MEETING WITH
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LABOFF ON JUNE 30, ZINDOGA NOTED THAT, IN HIS OPINION, THE MDC HAD CONSUMED ENTIRELY TOO MUCH OF THE ZCTU'S MANPOWER, AS ZCTU OFFICIALS AT THE LOCAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL LEVELS DEVOTED THEIR TIME AND ENERGY TO THE PARTY RATHER THAN TRADITIONAL UNION DUTIES. ZINDOGA ADDED THAT HE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE WORKERS' DEMANDS ADDRESSED THROUGH TRADITIONAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN EACH INDUSTRY'S NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (NEC), RATHER THAN BY FORMING A NEW POLITICAL PARTY THAT WAS UNTESTED AND HAD NO EXPERIENCE WITH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

15. (C) LABOFF ASKED MATONGO AND ZCTU DIRECTOR OF ORGANIZING JAMES MAKORE HOW ZINDOGA, A KNOWN ZANU-PF LOYALIST, COULD RISE THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE ZCTU TO BECOME DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL (AND THUS POISED TO ASSUME LEADERSHIP OF THE ORGANIZATION), AT A TIME WHEN UNION MEMBERS' FRUSTRATION WITH GOZ POLICIES WAS APPROACHING ITS APEX. THE ANSWER WAS SIMPLE, THEY SAID - CASH PAY-OFFS. SUPPORT FOR ZINDOGA WAS NOT DRAWN ALONG UNION LINES, BUT RATHER FROM INDIVIDUAL UNION MEMBERS WHOM ZINDOGA, WITH FINANCIAL BACKING FROM THE MINISTER OF LABOR AND THE BLESSING OF PRESIDENT MUGABE, PAID TO HELP VOTE HIM IN AS DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL AT THE 1998 ANNUAL CONGRESS. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT ATTEST TO THE VALIDITY OF THESE ACCUSATIONS, THE IDEA THAT ZINDOGA PAID OFF THE RIGHT ZCTU MEMBERS TO HELP GENERATE VOTES IN 1998 IS PLAUSIBLE, PARTICULARLY CONSIDERING HIS UNUSUALLY RAPID RISE THROUGH THE RANKS SINCE JOINING THE ZCTU IN 1995. END NOTE.)

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ZCTU RENDERED INEFFECTIVE

16. (C) ACCORDING TO MATONGO AND MAKORE, ZINDOGA HAS FAILED TO CARRY OUT HIS LEADERSHIP DUTIES AT THE ZCTU IN A PREMEDITATED EFFORT TO BRING THE ORGANIZATION TO A STANDSTILL. ZINDOGA, ON THE OTHER HAND, TOLD LABOFF THAT IT HAS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO "RALLY THE TROOPS," PARTICULARLY WITHIN THE ZCTU EXECUTIVE, AS THEY HAVE BEEN DEVOTING SO MUCH OF THEIR TIME DURING BUSINESS HOURS TO MDC ACTIVITIES. WHATEVER THE REASONS, THE FACT IS THAT THE ZCTU HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY SILENT AND INERT SINCE THE DEPARTURE OF TSVANGIRAI AND SIBANDA IN APRIL. ZINDOGA AND MATONGO ADMIT THAT MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE -- ONCE A REQUIRED BI-MONTHLY EVENT -- HAVE BEEN FEW AND FAR BETWEEN IN RECENT MONTHS, WITH EACH MAN BLAMING THE OTHER FOR "SCHEDULING PROBLEMS." OTHER UNION CONTACTS TELL US THAT ZINDOGA NO LONGER MEETS REGULARLY WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE ZCTU'S 35 MEMBER UNIONS, AND THAT HE PROVIDES VIRTUALLY NO INSTRUCTION OR FEEDBACK TO THE ZCTU'S SIX OPERATIONAL DEPARTMENTS.

17. (C) OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO MATONGO AND MAKORE IS ZINDOGA'S CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH FLORENCE

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CHITAURO, MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE, LABOR, AND SOCIAL
WELFARE. THEY CLAIM THAT ZINDOGA, UNLIKE ANY OF HIS ZCTU
PREDECESSORS, HOLDS REGULAR PRIVATE MEETINGS WITH
CHITAURO AT HER MINISTRY. ON TWO OCCASIONS THIS YEAR,
ADDED MATONGO, ZINDOGA AND CHITAURO HAVE MET DIRECTLY
(AND PRIVATELY) WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE. ZINDOGA DOES NOT
DISCLOSE THE DETAILS OF THESE DISCUSSIONS TO ANY OF HIS
ZCTU COLLEAGUES. "HE SPENDS MORE TIME WITH FLORENCE THAN
WITH ANY OF US," HUFFED MATONGO. "FOR INSTANCE, WE HAD
FINALLY MANAGED TO SCHEDULE A MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE IN LATE JUNE TO PLAN FOR THE ANNUAL CONGRESS.
ZINDOGA NEVER SHOWED, NEVER CALLED -- NOTHING. HIS
SECRETARY TOLD ME HOURS LATER THAT HE HAD GONE TO GENEVA

SIPDIS
WITH CHITAURO FOR THE ILO CONVENTION. HE HADN'T
MENTIONED TO ANY OF US THAT HE WAS LEAVING."

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18. (C) MEANWHILE, WORKSHOPS ON A VARIETY OF LABOR TOPICS
-- WHICH ARE AMONG THE ZCTU'S CORE "BREAD AND BUTTER"
SERVICES TO ITS MEMBERS -- HAVE BEEN CANCELED OR DELAYED
BECAUSE OF ZINDOGA'S REFUSAL TO AUTHORIZE FUNDING. THE
ZCTU'S ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT, WHOSE ATTORNEYS ASSIST
INDIVIDUAL WORKERS WITH LEGAL DISPUTES, HAS BEEN
SIMILARLY INACTIVE PENDING A "BUDGET REVIEW." MATONGO
AND MAKORE ARGUE THAT LACK OF FINANCES IS A SPURIOUS
ARGUMENT ON ZINDOGA'S PART; THE ZCTU'S FY2000 BUDGET WAS
APPROVED AT ITS ANNUAL CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER 1999.
MEMBERSHIP DUES HAVE NOT DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY SINCE
THAT TIME, AND THE ZCTU'S SIX DEPARTMENTS WERE ALLOCATED
ROUGHLY THE SAME RESOURCES THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED IN
PREVIOUS YEARS. IN SHORT, THERE IS NO REASON WHY FUNDING
FOR NORMAL ZCTU FUNCTIONS SHOULD NOT BE READILY
AVAILABLE.

POOR RELATIONS WITH AFL-CIO'S SOLIDARITY CENTER

19. (C) EVEN MORE FRUSTRATING, SAID MATONGO, HAS BEEN
ZINDOGA'S BLOCKAGE OF FUNDS FROM THE SOLIDARITY CENTER
IN HARARE, A BRANCH OF THE AFL-CIO'S AMERICAN CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL LABOR SOLIDARITY. FORMER SOLIDARITY CENTER
RESREP MARTIN DOUGHERTY TOLD LABOFF BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE
IN JUNE THAT, DESPITE HISTORICALLY EXCELLENT RELATIONS
WITH THE ZCTU, ZINDOGA HAS SHUNNED THE AMERICAN NGO,
WHICH FUNDS IT HAS USED PRIMARILY TO HELP THE ZCTU
CONDUCT LABOR WORKSHOPS AND GRASSROOTS CAPACITY

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BUILDING. ACCORDING TO DOUGHERTY, ZINDOGA SHARES THE
GOZ'S SUSPICION THAT THE SOLIDARITY CENTER IS REALLY

A NEW EXECUTIVE AT THE 2000 ANNUAL CONGRESS. (NOTE: EVERYONE, INCLUDING MATONGO AND ZINDOGA, EXPECTS THE TWO MDC LEADERS TO FORMALLY RESIGN FROM THE ZCTU IN THE COMING WEEKS. MATONGO IS PUSHING HARD TO HOLD THE ZCTU'S ANNUAL CONGRESS AS USUAL IN SEPTEMBER. HE AND MAKORE ARE CONFIDENT THAT ZINDOGA AND CHIFAMBA WILL BE VOTED OUT OF OFFICE BY THE LARGELY MDC MEMBERSHIP OF THE LABOR UNIONS. MATONGO NOTED THAT SEVERAL YOUNG, ENERGETIC, AND POPULAR CANDIDATES FROM THE RAILWAY WORKERS' AND BANK WORKERS' UNIONS ARE EAGER TO SECURE SEATS ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, OPINING THAT THEY WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE OUSTING THE ZANU-PF CAMP. ZINDOGA, MEANWHILE, TOLD LABOFF THAT PLANS FOR THE ANNUAL CONGRESS WERE "PROCEEDING," BUT AGAIN THE LACK OF FUNDS WAS PREVENTING ORGANIZATION OF THE EVENT IN A TIMELY FASHION. ZINDOGA WOULD NOT COMMENT ON HIS CHANCES OF BEING ELECTED SECRETARY GENERAL (NOT ADMINISTRATIVELY PROMOTED BECAUSE

OF TSVANGIRAI'S DEPARTURE, AS WAS PREVIOUSLY THE CASE),
OR ON THE EXPECTED DATE OF THE CONGRESS.

COMMENT

112. (C) IT IS ENTIRELY PLAUSIBLE AND INDEED LIKELY THAT, AS THE ZCTU GREW IN STATURE AND ITS CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT BECAME INCREASINGLY STRIDENT IN 1998, PRESIDENT MUGABE INSTRUCTED MINISTER CHITAURO (HERSELF A FORMER TRADE UNIONIST) TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROBLEM. WHILE ZINDOGA'S ENTRANCE INTO THE ZCTU MAY OR

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MAV NOT BE PART OF A MASTER PLAN, HIS RAPID RISE TO THE TOP ALMOST CERTAINLY IS NO ACCIDENT. HE WAS PERFECTLY POISED TO TAKE TSVANGIRAI'S POSITION UPON HIS DEPARTURE FOR THE MDC IN APRIL, AND THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE THEORY THAT ZINDOGA HAS WORKED HARD TO MAKE SURE THE ZCTU -- THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL OPPOSITION MOVEMENT IN ZIMBABWEAN HISTORY -- HAS BECOME TOOTHLESS AND INERT.

113. (C) NONETHELESS, THE ZCTU'S LOCAL, PROVINCIAL, AND NATIONAL STRUCTURES HAVE BECOME FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY -- THANKS IN LARGE PART TO THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE AMERICAN SOLIDARITY CENTER. WITH THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP, THE ZCTU CERTAINLY HAS THE POTENTIAL TO RETURN TO ITS GLORY DAYS. AS INFLATION, THE COST OF LIVING, AND UNEMPLOYMENT CONTINUE TO SPIRAL UPWARD -- WITH THE GOVERNMENT MAKING NO STEPS TOWARD RECOVERY -- WORKERS WOULD LIKE TO SEE A REVITALIZED LABOR MOVEMENT NOW MORE THAN EVER. WE AGREE WITH MATONGO'S PREDICTION THAT ZINDOGA PROBABLY WILL BE VOTED OUT OF OFFICE AT THE NEXT ZCTU CONGRESS, ALTHOUGH WE EXPECT ZINDOGA'S ATTEMPTS TO STALL THE EVENT TO BE EFFECTIVE, PERHAPS EVEN INTO 2001. UNTIL ZINDOGA'S EFFORTS TO FLATLINE THE ZCTU ARE HALTED AND A BETTER LEADERSHIP RESTORED, WE DO NOT EXPECT TO HEAR OR SEE

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MUCH FROM ZIMBABWE'S LABOR MOVEMENT. END COMMENT.

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